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Urban District of Ottery St. Mary.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

for the Year

1937.



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Urban District of Ottery St. Mary.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
OTTERY ST. MARY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Madam and Gentlemen,

I beg to present to you my 15th Annual Report dealing with matters concerning the Public Health and Sanitary Administration of your District for the year 1937.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

The Area of the District comprises 10,008 Acres, and the population at the Census taken in 1931 was 3,713. This was an increase of 75 on the Census taken in 1921. There has been very little change in the resident population during the last year.

The number of Inhabited Houses in the District is 1,1051 and the average number of inmates is about 4.

The Rateable Value is £16,979, and the sum represented by the net produce of a penny rate is £65 5s. 0d.

The Neighbourhood is largely an Agricultural one. There are no occupations in the District having a prejudicial effect on the health.

VITAL STATISTICS.

			Total	M	F	
Live Births	Legitimate ...	42	20	22	}	Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population ... 11
	Illegitimate ..	0	0	0		
Stillbirths	...	...	0	0	0	Rate per 1,000 total (live & still births) 0
Deaths	...	...	66	29	37	Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resi- dent population 17.5
Deaths from Puerperal Causes						from sepsis ... 0
						from other ... 0

Deaths of Infants under one year of age :

All Infants	...	...	...	2
Legitimate Infants	...	...	...	2
Illegitimate Infants	...	...	...	0
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	...	...	...	0
„ Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	...	0
„ Diarrhæa (under 2 years)	...	...	...	0

Of the 66 Deaths 45 occurred in persons who had reached the age of 70 and upwards, and 22 who had reached the age of 80 and upwards.

There were 3 Deaths in persons over 90.

The average age for Death in the District is 68·35. The Death Rate is 17·5 per 1,000.

There were 6 Deaths from Cancer, 3 from Tuberculosis, 14 from Cerebral Hæmorrhage. 1 Accidental, and 3 Suicidal.

10 of the Deaths were transferable. The number of Deaths is the highest for some years, but it is noteworthy that the average age of Death is also higher.

There has not been much unemployment this last year, and I can trace no evidence that unemployment has exercised any deleterious influence on the health of the children or adults.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

For General Sickness the needs of the District and Neighbouring Areas are well served by the Ottery St. Mary and District Cottage Hospital.

During the year 113 Patients have been In-Patients in the Hospital, the average duration of the stay being 15·6 days.

67 Operations were performed during the year.

83 Accidents were treated, and 867 Out-Patients Attendances were made.

The average number of beds occupied during the year was 4·8

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

During the year the Centre was opened 42 times, and there were 44 Mothers on the Register, and 52 Children.

The number of Attendances made were :—

Mothers	...	461
Infants under 1 year	...	369
Toddlers (1—5 years)	...	219

Not quite so many Mothers have attended the Centre this year, but those that have attended have been more regular.

The Medical Officer attends every other Thursday from 2.30 to 3.30 p.m., and the Health Visitor every Thursday Afternoon, when she may be consulted between the hours of 2 and 4.30 p.m.

There are no Hospitals for Small Pox, Children's Ailments or Maternity Cases in the Area

There were no Deaths from Puerperal causes during the year. In any case of Puerperal Pyrexia the Medical man in attendance takes swabs from the mother and has them examined at the Laboratory in Exeter. Under the County Council Scheme a specialist may be called in for an emergency in a difficult case of labour.

Infectious Cases such as Diphtheria, Typhoid Fever, and Scarlet Fever are sent to Whipton Isolation Hospital at the Council's expense. Special Ambulances are sent from Whipton to remove any Infectious Cases to the Fever Hospital. In exceptional cases the Council supplies a Trained Nurse to attend any Infectious Case which is too ill to be removed to an Isolation Hospital.

Cases of Tuberculosis come under the County Tuberculosis Officer, and are removed to Ivybank in Exeter, or to Hawkmoor Sanatorium, if considered advisable. In suitable cases the County supplies shelters for open-air treatment at home.

Cases of Venereal Disease are recommended for treatment at the Special Clinic provided in Exeter.

For Non-Infectious and Accident Cases there is an Ambulance in Honiton staffed by the Red Cross Society, and Ambulances can also be procured from Exeter or Sidmouth, and one of them has always been available when required.

The Public Health Staff of the Council consists of a Medical Officer of Health and a Sanitary Inspector—both are part-time Officers.

During the year there has been one Trained Midwife practising in the District.

There is an Orthopædic Clinic in Honiton to which children may be referred for advice and treatment. Voluntary workers take the children to and from the Clinic once a week. In certain cases children requiring Hospital Treatment are sent from this Clinic to the Orthopædic Hospital in Exeter.

There are no other Special Hospitals or Clinics in the District, and the general arrangements for pathological investigations and for infectious disease cases are the same as in previous years.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Although there has been an ample supply, the Water this year has once again proved to be of an unsatisfactory quality, despite the considerable amount of work done on it by the Council during the

previous year. After heavy rains the water has sometimes been discoloured, while during dry periods this has not been noticed. The inference is therefore that surface water is able to contaminate the supply. Frequent samples have been taken, with results varying with the weather conditions at the time when the samples were taken. In dry weather the samples have been excellent, but in wet weather *Bacillus Coli* has been found in the water. Although this germ is in itself considered harmless, the very fact that it can gain an entrance to our water makes it clear that any other germs which might be dangerous could also find their way in. The Council decided therefore that a thorough investigation by qualified engineers was necessary, and this is now in hand.

The water is collected into high and low level storage tanks from springs on East Hill.

There are 679 houses in the Area served by this water supply. In the Rural Area the houses obtain their water from springs and wells.

On West Hill there is a private water supply which is utilised by a number of houses.

At Tipton St. John's there is a public water supply in the middle of the village. There are five springs which run into a well about 12 feet deep, and a good supply is thus obtained. At one time it was noticed that the water was becoming discoloured, and an analysis showed that the well was being contaminated by surface water. The well was pumped out, and the cover which had sunk was raised in order to prevent surface water getting in, and subsequent analyses have been satisfactory. There is also a public pump at Wiggaton.

The Town Sewerage and Drainage consists of a main drainage scheme of a sewer leading to a septic tank from which the sewage passes over six filter beds to the irrigation area. During the year the sewers have become choked on a few occasions, and have received immediate attention. When discovered defective house drains have been repaired by the owners. A new sewer to Spring Gardens was connected to the main during the year.

In the Rural Area some of the houses are provided with cess-pits.

In the Town Area the houses are provided with Water Closets, but in many cases one w.c. serves two houses.

In the Rural Area the majority of the houses are provided with Pail Privies, the contents of which are disposed of by the occupiers in their gardens or allotments.

A tabulated statement of the number of Sanitary Conveniences of each type in the District, and particulars as to the number of conversions from one type of Convenience to another, are appended in the Sanitary Officer's Report.

The Sanitary Arrangements and Water Supply to the Schools have been satisfactory.

No action has been necessary for the eradication of bed bugs.

SCAVENGING.

In the Town Area a Twice-Weekly Collection of House Refuse is carried out by the Council's Workmen, who also during the year have performed satisfactorily the work of Cleansing the Street Gullies and Catch-pits.

In the Rural Area indestructible refuse is collected once a month throughout the year.

WORK OF THE SANITARY INSPECTOR.

The Sanitary Inspector reports to me as follows regarding the work and nature of Inspections made by him during the past year.

999 Inspections were made during the year, comprising :—

Dwelling Houses	...	63
Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops	...	74
Bakehouses	...	44
Factories and Workshops	...	56
Slaughter-houses	.	412
Miscellaneous Inspections for the Detection of Nuisances		350

8 Notices were served, 8 being complied with,

These Notices comprised 8 Preliminary Notices 8

HOUSING.

1. General Housing Conditions

During the year the Council completed the work on the new houses at Metcombe. These houses were built to replace houses condemned under the Slum Clearance Act at Metcombe and Coombe Goyle.

Eleven houses were erected by private individuals.

There is still a shortage of working-class houses in the District.

2. Overcrowding.

There were no cases of Overcrowding during the year.

3. Fitness of Houses.

The houses in the working-part District are mostly of the cottage type. The general character of defects existing in some of the houses are poor surroundings—deficient light and air and dampness.

Cases of unfitness are dealt with as they occur.

There are no unhealthy Areas in the District.

Housing Statistics for the Year 1937.

1.

Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the Year :—

1.	a.	Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects, under Public Health or Housing Acts...	...	63
	b.	Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	...	63
2.	a.	Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head 1) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 ...	...	0
	b.	Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	...	0
3.		Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ...	...	0

2.

4.		Number of dwelling-houses exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation...	...	30
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Remedy of Defects during the year without Service of formal Notices :—

		Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	30
--	--	---	-----	----

3.

Action under Statutory Powers during the Year ;—

A—Proceedings under Sections, 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936.

1.		Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ...	...	0
2.		Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after formal notices :—		
	a.	By owners ...	...	0
	b.	By local authority in default of owners ...	...	0

B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts :

1.		Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ...	...	0
2.		Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :—		
	a.	By owners ...	...	0
	b.	By local authority in default of owners ...	...	0

2. C.—Proceedings under sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936

1.		Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ...	...	0
2.		Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ...	...	7

D.—Proceedings under section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936

1.		Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made ...	...	0
2.		Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit ...	...	0

4.

Housing Act, 1936. Overcrowding :—

(a)—(i)	Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	...	0
(ii)	Number of families dwelling therein	...	0
(iii)	Number of persons dwelling therein	...	0
(b)	Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year		0
(c) (i)	Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	...	0
(ii)	Number of persons concerned in such cases	...	0
(d)	Particulars of any cases in which dwelling-houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding	...	Nil
(e)	Any other particulars with respect to overcrowding conditions upon which the Medical Officer of Health may consider it desirable to report	...	Nil

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) Milk.

The Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops have been periodically inspected and found to be kept in a satisfactory condition.

Any defects are pointed out by the Sanitary Inspector, who sees that his recommendations are carried out.

No refusal or revocation or registration of retailers or of licenses for graded milk has been made.

56 Samples of Milk were taken from the Dairymen supplying milk during the year, and of these only 31 passed. The samples are examined and reported upon by the County Bacteriologist. When a sample taken shows a poor test the Sanitary Inspector visits the dairyman and gives instructions as to how to improve the purity of the supply. There is I think considerable room for improvement in the purity of the milk provided, although I consider that the milk producers are beginning to realise the importance of a pure milk supply.

(b) Meat.

The Slaughter-houses have been inspected and found to be clean and well conducted.

All Animals slaughtered in the District are inspected by the Meat Inspector. Condemned meat is buried in quick-lime, and with disinfectants, at the Council's expense.

Other Articles of Food exposed for sale have been periodically inspected, and no cause for complaint found.

The use of the Humane Killer is compulsory.

Carcases Inspected and Condemned.

	Cattle, ex- cluding Cows.	Cows.	Calves.	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs
Number killed (if known)	452		60	1020	552
Number inspected ..	452		60	1020	552
<i>All diseases except Tuberculosis.</i> Whole carcaes con- demned ..	0	0	0	0	0
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned		3	0	1	0
Percentage of the num- inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis ..		0.6		0.1	
<i>Tuberculosis only.</i> Whole carcasses con- demned ..	0	0	0	0	0
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ..		3			1
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuber- culosis ..		0.6			0.2

(c) Adulteration.

No action has been taken under the Food and Drugs (Adulteration) Act, 1928, the Artificial Cream Act, 1929, the Public Health (Condensed Milk) Regulations, 1923 and 1927, the Public Health (Dried Milk) Regulations, 1923, 1927, and the Public Health (Preservation in Food, etc.) Regulations, 1925 and 1927.

(d) Chemical and Bacteriological Examination of Food.

No use of Laboratories under this heading has been made.

(e) Nutrition.

No particular steps have been taken to increase the knowledge of the public in this matter, but the medical men in the District all help to spread useful information, and the Medical Officer and Nurses at the Infant Welfare Centre lecture the mothers on Nutrition.

(f) Shell-fish (Molluscum.)

There are no Shell-fish beds in our District.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

The year 1937 was remarkable for its freedom from serious Infectious Diseases. Only 3 cases in all were notified, and those were cases of Diphtheria, two occurring in one house, the other being an isolated case. There was a considerable epidemic of Diphtheria in the surrounding districts, and the two cases were traced as having been in contact with the disease shortly before they moved in to our District. All the cases were given serum and promptly removed to Whipton Isolation Hospital.

No schemes have been adopted by the Council for the artificial immunisation of children and adults against any of the infectious diseases. A scheme has however been prepared, and would be used if necessary.

There was a serious outbreak of Polio-myelitis in the County, towards the end of the year, but although cases were reported on one or two of our boundaries we were fortunate in having no cases within our District.

There were no notifications of Malaria, Dysentery, Trench Fever or Encephalitis Lethargica.

The School intimations serve as a useful guide as to the amount of illness amongst the children, and may bring to the notice of the Medical Officer of Health serious diseases which are not reported by the parents.

Bacteriological Specimens, such as throat swabs, sputum, blood, etc. are sent to the Public Health Department in Exeter for examination.

There has been no Small Pox in the Area.

With regard to Tuberculosis, every effort is being made by the medical men in the Area to ensure early diagnosis and notification, and when there is any doubt the services of the County Tuberculosis Officer are at once procured. No deaths occurred in cases which had not been previously notified.

There were 6 fatal cases of Cancer during the year, but there were not enough cases to enable me to draw any sort of conclusions as to the prevalence or sex incidence of the disease. All the cases occurred in elderly persons whose ages were 85, 75, 75, 73, 72, 68. There are no special facilities in the Area for the diagnosis and treatment of Cancer. Cases for investigation are referred to the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital, when X Rays and Radium are used when necessary.

No action was taken during the year under Section 66 of the Public Health Act, 1925, for the prevention of blindness. Any serious disease or injury to the eyes are referred to the Eye Infirmary in Exeter.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (other than Tuberculosis) during the Year 1937.

<i>Disease.</i>	<i>Total Cases Notified.</i>	<i>Cases admitted to Hospital.</i>	<i>Total Deaths.</i>
Small Pox	0	0	0
Scarlet Fever	0	0	0
Diphtheria	3	3	0
Enteric Fever (including Paratyphoid)	0	0	0
Puerperal Fever	0	0	0
Pneumonia	1	0	0
Erysipelas	0	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	0	0	0
Encephalitis Lethargica ..	0	0	0
Anterior Poliomyelitis ..	0	0	0

The 3 cases of Diphtheria were all in children of 6 to 7 years of age.

OPHTHALMIA NEANATORUM.—Nil.

During the year no new cases of Tuberculosis were notified.

TUBERCULOSIS.—New Cases and Mortality during 1937.

<i>Age Periods</i>	<i>New Cases.</i>				<i>Deaths.</i>			
	<i>Pulmonary.</i>		<i>Non Pul'ary</i>		<i>Pulmonary</i>		<i>Non Pul'ary</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
0 ...								
1 ...								
{ 5	0	
{ 15 ...								
{ 15 ...								
{ 25	0	0	0	
{ 25	1	0		
{ 35 ...								
{ 35 ...								
{ 45	1	...	0
{ 55	0			
65 and upwards								
Totals ...			Nil		1	1	0	0

There were two deaths from Tuberculosis during the year.

PUBLIC HEALTH (Prevention of Tuberculosis)
REGULATIONS, 1925.

No action under these Regulations was taken during the year.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1925.—(Section 62.)

No action under these Regulations was taken during the year.

Appended to my Report will be found the Report of the Sanitary Inspector, including the Tabular Statements required by the Minister of Health.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

F. N. SIDEBOTHAM, M.A., M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

May, 1938.



Sanitary Inspector's Report

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER, 1937.

Dear Sir,

Herewith I submit for your consideration my Annual Report.

SCAVENGING.

The Scavenging and Collection of House Refuse within the Town area, including the Cleansing of Street Gullies and Catch-pits, continue to be satisfactorily performed by the Council's own workmen.

The cleansings are removed by direct labour by means of the Council's own team labour.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

The Sewers have become choked on a few occasions and received immediate attention. Where discovered, Defective House Drains have been repaired by the Owners.

The Septic Tanks and Filter Beds at the Council's Sewage Disposal Works have acted fairly satisfactorily, a good deal of attention having been paid to the automatic lifts and fittings generally.

In the Town Area the Houses are provided with Water Closets and in the Rural Area with Pail Closets.

Many of the Water Closets in the Town Area serve two Houses.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

During the past year all premises upon which cases of Infectious Diseases have occurred have been disinfected, as and when instructed by you, by means of spraying and fumigation with Formalin Lamps.

Disinfectants have been freely supplied to all requiring the same.

NEW BUILDINGS.

During the year the Council approved Plans for the erection of 15 Dwelling-houses.

The Buildings have been inspected from time to time during construction.

NUISANCES.

350 General Inspections were made for the Detection of Nuisances.

Number of Nuisances found	...	8
Number of Nuisances abated	...	8
Number of Houses partly re-drained	...	6
Defective Water Closets repaired	...	4
Accumulations of Refuse removed	...	2
Defective Roofs repaired	...	14
Preliminary Notices served	...	14
Statutory Notices served	...	0

HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING.

The majority of the Houses in the District are small, generally having only two bedrooms, and ill suited for persons with large families. A great number of Cottages are old and dilapidated. Rents are generally low.

There is still a shortage of Working-class Houses in the District. A few Houses are being erected by private enterprise.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS AND WORKSHOPS.

Periodical Inspections to the Cowsheds, Dairies, etc. have been made and generally they were found to be kept in a satisfactory condition.

FOOD AND MEAT INSPECTION.

The carcasses and organs of all animals slaughtered in the District, for human consumption, are inspected before sale.

Periodically, I have inspected other Articles of Food exposed for sale.

The following meat was surrendered and destroyed as being unfit for human consumption :—

358 lbs. Bullocks organs.
14 lbs. Pigs organs, etc.
50 lbs. Mutton.

During the past 12 months 2,084 carcasses have been inspected as follows :—

Bullocks	...	...	452
Pigs	...	...	552
Sheep	...	...	1020
Calves	...	...	60
			<hr/>
			2,084

FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS AND BAKEHOUSES.

The Bakehouses, Workshops, &c. have been inspected from time to time and were found generally to be well kept. No underground Bakehouses exist.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.

General visits of Inspection were made to the Slaughter-houses in the District.

A few instances of Offal and Manure remaining for too long a period on the premises were discovered and orders given for its prompt removal.

Generally the Premises were well kept.

WATER SUPPLY.

The Town Area is supplied with water from the Council's Reservoirs, consisting of high and low level storage reservoirs.

All parts of the Town have had an ample supply of Water throughout the year. During the year there has been no complaint of shortage.

The Houses in the Rural Area obtain their Water from springs and wells.

A scheme for providing an additional water supply for the high levels of the Town is being prepared by Messrs. Lemon & Blizard, Civil Engineers.

Appended are the tabular statements required by the Ministry of Health.

I am, Sir,

Yours obediently,

E. ROGERS, M.I.M.C.E., and A.R.S.I.,
Sanitary Inspector.

May, 1938.

Dr. F. N. Sidebotham, M.A., M.D., &c., Medical Officer of Health,
Ottery St. Mary.

Particulars as to the Number of Sanitary Conveniences of each type in the District, and particulars as to the Number of Conversions from one type of Convenience to another.

Year ending 31st December, 1937.

Number of Privies with fixed receptacles	...	3
Number of Privies with movable receptacles	...	70
Number of Fresh Water Closets	...	557

Conversions :

Privies fixed to movable receptacles	...	8
Privies with fixed receptacles to Fresh Water Closets	...	2
Privies with fixed receptacles to Waste Water Closets	...	0
Privies with movable receptacles to fresh w.c.'s		0
Privies with movable receptacles to waste w.c.'s		0
Waste Water converted to pail privies	...	0

Particulars under the Housing Act, 1930 :

Inspections for the Year 1937.

Number of Dwelling-houses inspected	63
Number found to be unfit for Human Habitation unless extensive repairs are carried out	0
Number of Houses unfit and unoccupied	4
Number of Houses with minor defects	30
Number as above repaired	30
Number of Demolitions by Owner	7

Works carried out for the Year ended 31st December, 1937.

999 Inspections were made during the year, comprising :—

74 Dairies, Cowsheds, Milkshops, &c.

44 Bakehouses.

56 Factories and Workshops.

412 Slaughter-houses.

63 Dwelling-houses, under the Housing Act, 1930.

350 Miscellaneous Inspections for the Detection of Nuisances.

8 Notices were served, 8 being complied with. These Notices comprised 8 Preliminary Notices.



